



## Helene E. Franchi

January 7, 1948 - March 1, 2026

Helene Elizabeth Kenchelian was born in San Francisco on January 7, 1948. A woman of profound class, grace, and integrity, Helene was a devoted mother, sister, and dedicated employee who called Napa home for over 65 years.

Her parents, Karney and Geraldine Kenchelian, settled in Napa in 1962 after moving through the Bay Area. It was in junior high school that Helene met the love of her life, Bruce Paul Franchi, and they were married in 1970. Helene graduated from Napa High in 1966 and went on to attend San Francisco College for Women (Lone Mountain) where she graduated with a BA in communications.

She cherished her role as a stay-at-home mother until the passing of her husband in 1983. Following this loss, Helene began a remarkable career journey defined by service and professional excellence. She first worked as a legal secretary at Coombs and Dunlap until 1985, then served at Thunder Road (Adolescent Treatment Center) until 1991. She returned to Coombs and Dunlap as a probate paralegal before landing her dream job at the County of Napa. Starting as a county analyst, she rose through the ranks to retire as the Deputy County Executive Officer. She was often referred to by those who knew her as one of the most unknown influential people in the county.

Above all else, Helene was proudest of her role as a mother and her ability to provide for her children and grandchildren. This devotion led her to move to New York City to support her youngest daughter, Lianne. In her late

seventies, she embraced city life, fearlessly navigating the Long Island Railroad, visiting museums, and walking miles sightseeing and exploring. A highlight of her final years was a family trip to Disney World in 2024.

Helene is survived by her two loving daughters and son-in-laws: Maria and Robert Torres, and Lisanne and Brett Testerman; her younger brother and sister, Mark Kenchelian and his wife Linda, and Christine Hogg; her three cherished grandchildren, Luke Bruce (13), Vera Louise (11), and Frankie Helene (9); as well as many nieces and nephews.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations to the following causes that were close to Helene's heart:

ECAD Service Dogs: <https://www.ecad1.org/index.php/programs-services>

Boys and Girls Club of St. Helena and Calistoga

Alternatively, planting a tree in honor of her life would be a meaningful tribute.

# Cemetery Details

## Tulocay Cemetery

411 Coombsville Rd  
Napa, CA 94558

# Previous Events

## Mass

MAR 5. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (PT)

St. John the Baptist Catholic Church  
981 Napa St.  
Napa, CA 94559  
(707) 226-9379  
<http://www.stjb1858.com/>

## Reception

MAR 5. 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM (PT)

Silverado Country Club  
1600 Atlas Peak Road  
Napa, CA

# Tribute Wall

RA

“ On behalf of the County of Napa, we were deeply saddened to hear of Helene’s passing. With profound appreciation for Helene, we send our deepest, heartfelt condolences to her entire family and her friends.

*Her dedication and service to the people of Napa County continues to inspire those who knew her. She was a true leader, and her legacy will continue to pave the way for those public servants who come long after her.*

*Please know that our thoughts are with you during this difficult time.*

*Ryan J. Alsop  
Chief Executive Officer  
County of Napa*

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**Ryan Alsop** - March 05 at 12:19 PM

MW

“ Marcia W. planted a grove of 3 [Memorial Trees](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Helene E. Franchi.

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**Marcia W.** - March 03 at 05:54 PM